



FOLLOWING JESUS IN FRIENDSHIP - September 2024

Read John 15:12-17, Proverbs 18:24, Proverbs 17:17, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Aristotle noted that people often form friendships with those similar to them in race, class, and education. However, the Christian faith offers a different view, teaching those shared experiences of Jesus Christ, a common love for the Gospel, and a deep interest in Scripture can foster profound friendships, even between individuals of different races, classes, genders, nationalities, or political beliefs.

In the Church, former enemies become friends through Christ's redemptive work, demonstrating the beauty and richness of love among people who might not otherwise connect. True friendship thrives in unity but also demands the challenging and sometimes costly work of accepting others. This requires two key elements: the courage to be open and vulnerable—sharing secrets and receiving feedback—and the commitment to remain steadfast, standing by friends through thick and thin, even when it's difficult.

1. In your experience why is it difficult for people to create deep and meaningful friendships?
What are the roadblocks?

2. Pastor Jonathan mentioned the four building blocks of a true friendship: Constancy, Carefulness, Candor and Counsel. Why are these marks so essential to building friendships?

3. Constancy: Have you experienced times in your life where you had a friend who was there for you no matter what?

4. Carefulness: The idea of knowing someone so well you are emotionally sensitive to the inner topography of their life. Have you experienced this on either side?

5. Candor: Do you have friendships that can share a hard truth without fear of you withdrawing? Are there friendships that you can share a hard truth they need to hear?

6. Counsel: The principle that you are reassuring as well as challenging to a friend. Can you give examples when a friend gave you counsel that changed the trajectory of your life?

7. Jesus is the ultimate example of what a friendship means.
"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."
Whether literally or metaphorically are there sacrificial steps you can take toward friends that model Jesus?

